THE NEMESIS OF MEDIOCRITY

RALPH ADAMS CRAM

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Cram, Ralph Adams,
1863-1942.
The nemesis of mediocrity

A STARTLING and revolutionary essay, provocative of argument and opposition. Dr. Cram, who is well known as an architect, author and educator, asks why at this world-crisis there should be so appalling a lack of competent leadership, and endeavors to answer the question by drawing a sharp line between "Democracy of ideal and Democracy of method."

The essay is an indictment of the obvious and a denunciation of the axiomatic, while it demonstrates the inner significance of the war and the influence it should have in determining the nature of "the world that follows the war."

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By

RALPH ADAMS CRAM, 1863–

LITT.D., LL.D.

BOSTON

MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

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"Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning. Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies. Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people; wise and eloquent in their instructions. Such as find out musical tunes and recited verses in writing. Rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations: All these were honoured in their generations and were the glory of their times." — ECCLESIASTICUS: XLIV.

ALREADY the revelations of war have cast their searching and mordant light on all that was brought over to us out of the last century, and nothing is as it seemed in those far and half mythical days when there was no war and we maintained a serene content well grounded on its broad base of solid accomplishment. It was a proud, even an august possession, this hoard of coined wealth such as men had never gathered before, made up as it was of all the broad and shining counters minted out of Renaissance, Reformation and Revolution, and with this vast reserve our solvency

seemed beyond suspicion. The touch of war is like that of the magician in the fairy tale, and enough of the bright counters already have turned to dried and worthless leaves to make us wonder if in the end a single coin may remain to us, honest gold, unclipped and undebased.

Some day the count of these revelations will be made up, but now the tale is not fully told, and we wait, aghast, as each day some old truism crumbles into folly, some dogma shows thin and evanescent, some fundamental principle of modernism reveals itself as a superstition as groundless as those we long ago had cast away. Meanwhile "here we have no continuing city;" the sands slide under our feet, and we touch nothing tangible as we reach out for support in a darkness that shows no sign of breaking.

Amongst these revelations there is none more unexpected, more baffling in the fact of its existence or broader in its ramifications, than the loss of leadership. To-day, when men cry aloud, as never before, for guides, interpreters, leaders, there is none to answer; in any category of life, issuing out of any nation. None, that is, that matches in power the exigency of the demand. There

are those that honestly try to lead; there are those that increasingly lead under the grim schooling of war, slowly, painfully and towards an end still obscure and undetermined. Arduously they struggle to build up a following, to see the insane life of the moment and see it whole; to keep ahead of the whirlwind of hell-let-loose and direct an amazed and disordered society along paths of ultimate safety. And always the event outdistances them, the phantasmagoria of chaos whirls bewilderingly beyond, and either they follow helplessly or are sucked into the rushing vacuum that comes in the wake of progressive destruction. In the immediate necessity of war one august general after another receives command, plays his part for a day, and disappears, marked by comparative failure if not by demonstrated incompetence. Potential reputations break down and are forgotten, in Mesopotamia, Gallipoli, Galicia, Roumania, the Trentino, the Carso, Champagne, the Argonne: on the North Sea, in the Channel, through the Mediterranean. The battle fronts east, west, south, bury more than the bodies of dead soldiers, for reputations are interned with them in a quick and merciful oblivion.

Still, fate is a whimsical arbiter, whose operations are unaccountable, and any day may appear the great leaders thus far coldly refused to the desperate and death-locked armies, but there is little hope for a like mercy in statesmanship. The years just before the war were tumultuous with the petty machinations of the degenerate political and diplomatic successors of the masterly manipulators of destiny of the nineteenth century. Noble or cynical, they were leaders, these men of a dead generation: Metternich, Cavour, Disraeli, Bismarck, Gladstone, Gambetta, Lincoln, and they have left few successors, either to their glory or their infamy. Can there be honest comparison between the political leaders in Great Britain to-day and Peel, Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli and Salisbury, between the flotsam and jetsam of French parliamentary turbulence and Thiers, Gambetta, de Freycinet? Contrast the men now controlling the destinies of Italy with those of the epoch of the Liberation; match the present politicians of Germany with those to the front from 1870 to 1895; place in one column the members of President Wilson's Cabinet, the leaders in Congress, the Governors of the several

States, and in the other the American political forces from 1860 on for the space of a generation. Whether you like them all or not, these men of an elder age, one thing you must concede, and that is their capacity and their dominance as leaders.

So one might traverse the fields of religion, philosophy, literature, art, education, matching each man who claims or is accorded priority, with those of the immediate past whose historical place is now as assured as was their acceptance during their lives. Long after the contemporary list finds "finis" written beneath, the other calendar continues until its length is greater by tenfold. Not only this, but there is unquestioned difference in quality; as between Harmsworth and Gladstone, Bryan and Cleveland, Benedict XV and Leo XIII, Wells and Emerson, Ornstein and Brahms. The leaders that once were, found their following through comprehension of their own force and dominance, those that are now, *faute de mieux,* and because there are no others to lead.

Inch by inch the valleys are being filled and the mountains brought low. More arduously the man stronger than another lifts

above the level uniformity; a few still continue, lasting over from an earlier generation, but in a year or two they also will pass, and few indeed are rising to take their place. Meanwhile "the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed," for the soul of sane man demands leadership, and in spite of academic aphorisms on Equality, a dim consciousness survives of the fundamental truth that without strong leadership democracy is a menace; without strong leadership culture and even civilization will pass away.

Now as always the great mass of men look for the master-man who can form in definite shape the aspirations and the instincts that in them are formless and amorphous; who can lead where they are more than willing to follow, but themselves cannot mark the way; who can act as a centripetal force and gather into potent units the diffuse atoms of like will but without co-ordinating ability. So great is this central human instinct (which was not only the foundation of feudalism but harks back to the very beginnings of society), that when the great leader is not revealed he is invented out of the more impudent element of any potential group, assur-

ance taking the place of competence; or optimistically assumed, the most available being dragged from his obscurity and pitched into a position, or burdened with a task, outside the limits of his ability — as he himself only too often knows.

And as the supply of leaders diminishes the more reckless becomes the desperate choice. It is perhaps not so much that men now reject all leadership as it is that they blindly accept the inferior type; the specious demagogue, the unscrupulous master of effrontery. Men follow to-day as they always have and always will, the difference lies in the quality of those that are followed. In default of the leader of the old type, the man who first saw beyond the obvious and drew others after him by force of vision and will and personal quality, the group, and the super-group which we call the mob, create their leaders in their own image, and out of their own material. Giolitti and Caillaux, Ramsay Macdonald, Lenine and La Follette are the synthetic product of a mechanical process of self-expression on the part of groups of men without leaders, but who must have them and so make shift to precipitate them in material form out of the undiffer-

entiated mass of their common inclinations, passions and prejudices.

It is because of this that religion is no longer marked by the dominance of figures like St. Paul, St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Francis, St. Catherine of Siena, or even like Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, but rather by the uncouth flotsam of the intellectual underworld or the obscurantist *faquirs* of a decadent Orientalism. It is because of this that no longer a Plato or an Aristotle, a St. Thomas Aquinas, or a Duns Scotus, a Kant, a Descartes, or a Herbert Spencer controls the destinies of philosophy, but semi-converted novelists, jejune instructors in psychology, and imperfectly developed but sufficiently voluble journalists. It is because of this that salutary movements like socialism, trades-unionism and political reform are betrayed by the leaders that, for lack of better, have been pitchforked into pre-eminence, and who, degraded and debased by dulness, obliquity of vision and crude incompetence, become not a benefit but a menace.

The argument that we are too near the present (since we ourselves *are* the present) to estimate greatness or establish our stand-

ard of comparative values, but that another generation will find amongst our contemporaries what we have missed, has no validity. I am speaking of leadership, and leadership is not posthumous. We knew, those of us who entered into the activities of life about 1880, that we were "surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses," that the world was so rich in leadership — either for wisdom or folly — we lacked no possible followings for our choice, but rather were confused by the plethora of options. There was no doubt then that there were great men around and about us. We were all hero-worshippers then, and there was sufficient reason for our worship. I have made a list of the men who were living in 1880, all of whom were great captains, and who would be accepted by all as leaders of men: there are sixty of them, and I can add another hundred of only a little less eminence, but whose claims some might contest. All of these hundred and sixty "immortals" had died before 1905, and I challenge anyone to fill a tenth of the places they left vacant with the names, unknown in 1880, of men whose claim can be unquestioned.

A generation that contains such a group

as Emerson, Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Bismarck, Disraeli, Cavour, Wagner, Browning, William Morris, Tourgeneff, Stevenson, Leo XIII, Cardinal Newman, Karl Marx and von Moltke is a generation that lacks nothing in leadership, and when is added a further century and a half of names, all practically of the same grade and class, we can only look back on those astonishing years with admiration, and then around at our own time, with the greatest issues in a thousand years clamouring for solution and almost none to lead in the solving, appalled and despairing, while we reach out blindly for some explanation of the cataclysm that has occurred.

There are those who will claim that the leadership has not been lost but only changed in direction. They will say that the leaders are now to be found in the ranks of applied science, of industrial exploitation and organization, of high finance and economic "efficiency." They will offer as their contribution Edison and Marconi and Krupp; Sage, Rockefeller, Morgan, Carnegie and the great Hebrew financiers of Europe. They will offer Ford, Harmsworth,

Hearst; the packers of Chicago, the mill magnates of New England, the coal and iron barons of Pennsylvania. Their contention may be admitted; the leadership exists, and it *has* changed direction; the point is, however, that this leadership, while it may conceivably supplement that of an earlier day in other fields, may, under no circumstance whatever, be assumed to serve as a substitute.

Mr. Abraham Flexner may well be held to contribute something (its essential value is not for the moment in question) to the idea of education as it was expounded by Cardinal Newman or Arnold of Rugby; Mr. Carnegie's vision of culture is not one that came within the purview of Emerson or Matthew Arnold or William Morris, while the original and varied, if not always edifying, religious cults of the last generation open up possibilities not indicated by Dr. Martineau or Bishop Brooks or even Cardinal Manning. Certainly there is something in *vers libre* and post-impressionism and the products of the cubist sculptors that escapes one in Browning and Burne-Jones and Saint-Gaudens. Considered in a supplementary sense these protagonists of modernism may be an extension of the principles of

their immediate precursors (even of all antecedent creators and leaders during the entire range of recorded history), but when it is assumed that they take their place the argument needs fortifying by something other than either the dictum itself or their own accomplishments.

In any case the day of great leaders has passed. If we take the Cardinal of Malines as a standard, as one man at least who measures up to the great controlling and directing agencies of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, we shall find it hard to pick others to place in his class. Certainly not the successor of Leo XIII and Innocent III, of Gregory VII and Gregory the Great; nor any of the present College of Cardinals. Honour and devotion, learning and piety are not wanting, but where is the vision, where the qualities of command and domination, where the power and the will that mark the captains of men? Neither from Rome nor Moscow nor Canterbury, neither from the Episcopal Church nor from the Protestant denominations, comes the high call for men to rise up and follow along the lines revealed by clear vision and under the dynamic force of personal leadership. Halt-

ing and hesitant, bewildered by opportunism and expediency, dumb before a crisis beyond their powers to meet, the shepherds and pastors of flocks already more than decimated, shake in their indecision, put the great issue to one side, and while they wait helplessly for a time more in scale with their abilities, turn to the old round of theological argument and disciplinary bickerings, leaving the fate of their sheep to be determined after a fashion they cannot control, and the humbler clergy busy themselves with parochial routine or, to their honour, find on the blazing and thundering battle fronts of all Europe opportunity for heroic service in the trenches and often a glorious death.

Nor in philosophy is the condition very different. There were not wanting, in the immediate years before the war, men of "light and leading," though apart from Bergson, James and Chesterton (though it may seem strange to name the last in this connection), they were hardly of the calibre of their forebears. James is dead, Bergson almost completely silent, while Chesterton, perhaps under the compulsion of his grave illness, fails to meet the standard of his earlier period, except perhaps in "The Crimes

of England" and "A Short History of England." Dr. Jacks comes well to the fore on occasion, and Dr. Figgis and March Phillips, but Bernard Shaw has silenced his philosophical cynicism and Wells alone insists on his own narrow vision, brought over from the ante-bellum epoch, with all its mechanistic formulæ and indeterminate determinism.

Of all the ruined sanctuaries, that of statesmanship is the most desolate. It was sufficiently laid waste in the years just before the war, when diplomacy, degenerate and incompetent, toiled along the dishonoured road that led from the Congress of Berlin. Into the coil of cynicism and trickery, Edward VII and President Cleveland brought some elements of honesty and good sense, but the chancelleries of Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London, Petersburg were united in one thing, and that their devotion to the secret, the serpentine and the oblique. The "Balance of Power," poisonous heritage from the Treaty of Berlin, controlled all that was thought or done, and under its malignant spell considerations of honour, justice and righteousness vanished from the secret deliberations of the various and ever-changing groups of inferior conspirators. Since the

opening of the war small men, pitched neck-and-crop into big places, have struggled against this legacy, and with scant success. Government in France at the opening of the first of the Seven Seals, was a tangle of political corruption complicated by terror of what socialism would demand next; the prolonged crisis has produced—Briand, and no more, a small man, strengthened by responsibility and opportunity, who bore himself with firmness and honesty. He has now been deposed through the machinations of the still operative political cabals, to give place to the venerable but neither stimulating nor convincing Ribot, the colourless Painlevé and the superannuated Clemenceau. England offered Asquith, a somewhat sinuous and agile mediocrity now smashed by an extraordinary journalistic phenomenon who has also been largely responsible for Lloyd George, another small man, essentially the middle-class demagogue of the first decade of the century, who has also been fortified and chastened by the compelling force of anomalous circumstances. With him appear men like Churchill, still bending under the weight of tragic fiascos, Carson, whom the war saved from becoming a rebel and an

outlaw, together with a numerous clan of financiers and industrial magnates, some of whom had already exchanged their historic Hebraic cognomens for others associated, if not with their own genealogy, at least with the Norman conquest. Italy, after getting rid of her political hucksters and demagogues, has produced none of even moderate distinction to take their place. In the Balkans Jonescu and the Cretan Venezelos arrived with some heralding of trumpets, but neither has succeeded in accomplishing anything in particular, and both are now relegated to the category of geniuses "without the enacting clause." Leaping suddenly into the Russian limelight come Miliukoff, Count Lvoff and Kerensky; the revolution is effected, the exaltation of the "Oath of the Tennis Court" is repeated, and at once, from far down amongst the submerged majority, anarchy and insane folly rise up, insistent, not to be denied, and already their power is in eclipse, extinguished by the rising tide of nihilism and dishonour — leaders who could not lead.

As for the Teutonic Empires, from Kaiser to Scheidemann there is only mediocrity masquerading in the tarnished regalia of

Bismarck and Andrassy. Precariously von Bethmann, with phantasmal Austrian nobles, insecure Hungarian magnates and Osmanli pashas, struggles to meet increasingly impossible problems at home and abroad, and the time is not far away when the final crisis a Bismarck might victoriously have met, will show them thin and evanescent, pale futilities who could not lead, neither could they control. And America? Well, when the war broke we had three potential leaders, the President, Colonel Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan, together with the untried forces of Cabinet, Congress and the State and municipal governments. What had been the result on these varied personalities of the unexampled stimulus of a world in chaos if not in dissolution? Thus far, apart from the President, the three and a half years of universal liquidation have neither produced a leader unknown before nor raised the standard of individuals or of the general mass of politicians. On the whole the average has been lowered. If on the one hand we have the reliable honesty and ability of men like Senators Lodge, Borah and Williams, with the mysterious and promising figure of Colonel House, we find on the other the

ominous figures of Stone, Cummins, Gronna, Clark, Vardaman, La Follette, together with the depressing personalities that dominate and give its colour to the Cabinet. Outside administration circles the reader may pick from the several States such men as he considers measure up to the old standard of effective leadership, or even to that of the era just preceding the war. Of the three conspicuous figures first named, one appears to have forfeited the position open to him of great constructive leadership while honourably refusing to follow up the sinister opportunities revealed in the earlier days of the war, and has retired into an oblivion only broken in the beginning by sheer force of ingratiating oratory. The second strove for a renewal of that popular confidence and to restore that popular following he so eminently deserved, and failed, though in this failure was less of discredit to him than to a public somewhat defective in its powers of perception and in its standard of comparative values. And the third, the most august figure of all? Here, if anywhere to-day, is revealed the argument against the thesis I adduce — perhaps as the exception that proves the rule. The most astute politician

America has produced since Andrew Jackson (if not since Jefferson), with an infallible sense for apprehending the unexpressed will of a working majority, he pursued for three years the standard method of contemporary politics, gauging this will by impeccable instinct, making it his own, and so becoming the acceptable type of leader who does not lead but obediently follows on where the majority-will indicates the way. Then almost insensibly this method changed; little by little as the inclusive incapacity of the democratic method revealed itself it was relegated to the background while a very real and equally constructive leadership took its place. Step by step the advance has been progressive and explicit; miraculously the nation as a whole acknowledges and accepts, while the influence of this novel and reassuring leadership daily reaches further and further into the other nations of the earth. It is a single leadership: Cabinet and Congress are granted little part therein and only the mysterious influences of unofficial and personal advisers shyly reveal themselves from time to time. It is a real leadership, of the old and almost forgotten type, and increasingly is it bringing coherency out of

the debilitated confusion of democratic methods and parliamentary incapacity that have hampered our allies and imperilled their cause since the beginning of the war. And now opportunity opens before him; opportunity not only national but world-wide. If he wills he may become the co-ordinating, the directing, and the constructive force in the world, Arbiter of Democracy, re-creator of the true democracy of ideal. The old tradition of politics, the sensitive appreciation of a vacillating majority-will and the subtle following thereof in all its tergiversations, has been abandoned in favour of a daring and therefore true leadership prefigured by some of the finest verbal pronouncements of high principle the Republic has thus far heard. The old days when we were told of a "peace without victory," and that we as a nation had no quarrel with the German people; the days when we were assured that the aims of Germany and those of the Allies were apparently much the same; the days of experimental adventures in compromise are now very far away. Does this mean that from now on the course followed will be increasingly exalted, high-spirited and courageous? It may well be;

if so, and to that extent, the present lack of world-leadership will be corrected.

Tested by every standard this leadership is now deficient both in quantity and quality. To what are we to attribute this anomalous condition? Why is it that our lack is not only appalling when compared with those periodical moments of the past when, as in the eleventh century, every nation of Europe was following leaders as amazing in number as they were commanding in ability, but even in contrast with the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This was not an epoch to which future generations will look back with any notable degree of pride, yet it left us a heritage of great names that, as I have said before, reached the number of one hundred and fifty, a count that could be increased to two hundred if the arbitrary quarter century I have chosen, during which all were still living, were extended by ten years before 1880 and by five after 1905.

The answer is simple, but it is an answer that will be rejected with practical unanimity. Democracy has achieved its perfect work and has now reduced all mankind to a dead level of incapacity where great leaders are no longer either wanted or brought into

existence, while society itself is unable, of its own power as a whole, to lift itself from the nadir of its own uniformity.

"The world must be made safe for democracy" is a noble phrase, but it is meaningless without its corollary, "democracy must be made safe for the world." This latter condition does not exist. For exactly one hundred years democracy has suffered a progressive degeneration until it is now not a blessing but a menace.

This categorical statement demands both amplification and explanation. In the first place the word "democracy" is used in its current sense, as representing both the implicit aim and the explicit result of individual and community life during the last two generations in Great Britain, France and the United States; and in all other countries where any portion of the democratic system has been put in practice, including the very recent "republics" of Portugal, China and Russia. It covers not only political agencies and methods but all those other forms of activity, such as organized religion, education and social life, where democratic principles and devices have been increasingly adopted.

It does not mean the real democracy,

which is the noblest ideal ever discovered by man or revealed to him. True democracy means three things: Abolition of Privilege; Equal Opportunity for All; and Utilization of Ability. Unless democracy achieves these things it is not democracy, and no matter how "progressive" its methods, how apparently democratic its machinery, it may perfectly well be an oligarchy, a kakistocracy or a tyranny. The three imperative desiderata named above may be achieved under a monarchy, they may be lost in a republic, the mechanism does not matter. One of the chief faults with what we call our democracy is our stolid failure to understand that there is a democratic ideal and a democratic method, that there is not necessarily any connection between the two, and that generally speaking the democratic method (unstable, constantly changing its form) is incapable of accomplishing the democratic ideal.

That "democracy" for which the war is to make the world safe is of course the democracy of ideal; it could not conceivably be the democracy of method for this had proved itself in the two generations before the war corrupt, incompetent and ridicu-

lous, while during the war it has revealed increasingly its almost sublime incapacity in all matters where it has had a part; from Westminster to Rome, from Washington to Petrograd. The only thing that has thus far saved the Allies from the utmost penalty of their common democracy of method has been the process which has proceeded everywhere of eliminating the democracy and substituting a pure and perfectly irresponsible absolutism, whether of one man or a very small committee.

Now for the last hundred years the world has abandoned itself to an insane devising of new mechanical toys for the achieving of democracy: representative government, the parliamentary system, universal suffrage, the party system, the secret ballot, rotation in office, the initiative, referendum and recall, popular election of members of upper legislative houses, woman suffrage, direct legislation. All have failed to obtain abolition of privilege, equal opportunity and utilization of ability, on the contrary, they have worked in the opposite direction, and so far as these three things are concerned, the peoples are worse off than they were fifty years ago, while during the same

period government and society have become progressively more venal, less competent and further separated from the ideals of honour, duty and righteousness. Meanwhile so obsessed have we become by our pursuit of new devices for obtaining democracy, and by our search for nostrums to cure the ills of our constant failures, we have now wholly forgotten in what democracy consists.

In the year before the war the government of the great democracies — Great Britain, France and the United States — was illogical, inefficient, and widely severed from the one object of obtaining for all men justice and the rule of law. It was profoundly cursed by the incubus of little men in great office, by chaotic, selfish and unintelligent legislation, dull, stupid and frequently venal administration, and by partial, unscrupulous and pettifogging judicial procedure. Everywhere the bulk of legislation increased to preposterous proportions as its quality degenerated. Superficial, doctrinaire, and engendered by selfish personal interests, it ceased to command respect or even obedience in proportion as it became vacillating and insecure. Legisla-

tive decrees, subject to sudden abrogation or reversal, took the place of laws. With the party system dominant (now severed entirely from fundamental principle and become simply the engine of spoils), democratic administrative machinery became the obedient agency of a partizan and irresponsible committee, maintaining itself through purchased "honours," and exemption from well-deserved penalties, in England; through alliances with secret and equally irresponsible cabals whose object was plunder of one sort or another, in France; and through deals, spoils and "pork," in the United States. Everywhere the standard of personal ability sank lower and lower, until all manner of ignorant, incapable and frequently venal men, without culture, tradition or principle, forced up from the submerged strata of society, entered into the legislative and executive and administrative departments of government and took possession. The kind of men rife in the Chambre des Députés and in the short-lived ministries were of the same type found in the provincial *mairies,* ignorant, doctrinaire, self-sufficient, with the insolence of power clouding even what flickerings of native in-

telligence or honour they may have possessed. The full story of what happened in England between the death of Gladstone and the triumph of Lloyd George has not yet been written, but the facts are known if unavowed. Autocracy in its worst form, in Byzantium, the Renaissance or the eighteenth century, contains no more sordid examples of base trafficking in honours, emoluments and privileges, while never was the personal quality of the beneficiaries so radically unworthy and so malevolent in its influence on the State.

During the Middle Ages, when the ideal of democracy was at its highest point, and when it was most nearly achieved, it was held as incontrovertible that the purpose of political organization was primarily ethical and moral, and that its function was the achievement of righteousness and justice. Authority was from God, and the power also to enforce that authority, but both were operative only when they were used for right ends. *"La dame ne le sire n'en est seigneur se non dou dreit."* Equally unquestioned was the fact that law was not made, but was the concrete expression of that morality, right and justice that had grown

with the life of the community, exactly expressing the needs of society, and with the moral sanction of communal life behind it. "There is no King where will rules and not law" was the Mediæval conviction as opposed to the absolutism of the Renaissance first expressed in theoretical form by Macchiavelli. Finally the Middle Ages asserted that Government was a solemn contract between ruled and rulers, to be broken by neither without the abrogation of the contract. Treason on the part of the sovereign was then as clearly recognized a possibility as treason on the part of the people.

This great ideal, the noblest man has yet conceived in the realm of civil law, was completely destroyed by the Renaissance, and absolutism took its place. This, having made itself intolerable, was in its turn destroyed in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when once more the old ideals of Mediæval freedom came to the front though in a somewhat different verbal guise. The Oath of the Tennis Court, the Declaration of Independence, the Reform Laws of England were all assertions of the true principles of the real democracy, but they were

destined either to fail of fulfillment or to only a brief duration of power, partly because of the shattering of the sense of right and wrong by Calvinism and other Protestant phenomena, partly because their birth coincided with an industrial development that blotted out for the time all considerations except those of material benefit and of selfish advancement. Here and there, for brief periods of time, righteous impulses made operative a true democracy, but by the middle of the century the battle had been lost: materialism, omnipotent in its power, invincible through its self-created energies, was everywhere supreme, and from then on was recorded only the progressive development of a conscienceless material imperialism, the incessant invention of new and always unsuccessful machines for the obtaining of the old democratic ideals, the growth, through rage and impotence at the solemn mockery, of violent and revolutionary propaganda along nihilistic, anarchistic or socialistic lines, and finally the apotheosis of inefficiency, injustice and unrighteousness that held the democracies of the world when the Teutonic Powers made their desperate but perfectly logical attempt to establish the

hegemony of Europe under the dominion of efficiency, materialism and force.

That very wise Frenchman, Emile Faguet, has said, "The sum and substance of the Revolution was to substitute for 'Votre Majesté' 'Votre Majorité.'" The absolutism and the tyranny remained, only its habitat and its personality were changed. Something however was lost, and that the possibility that legislation and the execution of the laws might sometimes approach intelligence and efficiency. In another place the same author says: "Our examination of modern democracy has brought us to the following conclusions. The representation of the country is reserved for the incompetent and also for those biassed by passion, who are doubly incompetent. The representatives of the people want to do everything themselves. They do everything badly and infect the government and the administration with their passion and incompetence."

Democratic government for the last twenty-five years has neither desired nor created leaders of an intellectual or moral capacity above that of the general mass of voters, and when by chance these appear

they are abandoned for a type that is not of the numerical average but below it, and the standard has been lowering itself steadily for a generation. The strong man, strong of mind, of will, of moral sense, the man born to create and to lead, now seeks other fields for his activity, or rather one field alone, and that the domain of "big business" and finance. Here at least he finds scope for his force and will and leadership, even if the opportunities to use his moral sense to advantage leave something to be desired. The world no longer wants or knows how to use statesmen, philosophers, artists, religious prophets and shepherds, but rather "captains of industry," directors of "high finance," "efficiency experts," shrewd manipulators of popular opinion through journalism, or of popular votes through primaries, political conventions, and the legislative chambers of representative government. Here also the demand creates the supply.

Tributary to this demand is the current system of popular education, probably the worst ever devised so far as character-making is concerned. Secularized, eclectic, vocational and intensive educational systems

do not educate in any true sense of the word, while they do not develop character but even work in the opposite direction. The concrete results of popular education, as this has been conducted during the last generation, have been less and less satisfactory both from the point of view of culture and that of character, and the product of schools and colleges tends steadily towards a lower and lower level of attainment. Why anything else should be expected is hard to see. The new education, with religion and morals ignored except under the aspect of archaeology; with Latin and Greek superseded, and all other cultural studies as well; with logic, philosophy and dialectic abandoned for psychology, biology and "business administration"; the new education with its free electives and vocational training, and its apotheosis of theoretical and applied science (a glory and a dominion mitigated only by the insidious penetration of semi-professional athletics) — this new education was conceived and put in practice for the chief purpose of fitting men for the sort of life that was universal during the elapsed years of the present century, and this life had no place for pre-eminence, no use for

leadership, except in the categories of business, applied science and finance. It did its work to admiration, and the result is before us in the shape of a society that has been wholly democratized, not by filling in the valleys and lifting the malarial swamps of the submerged masses, but by a levelling of all down to their own plane.

The disappearance of religion as a vital force in human life and society, during the last century, has been a very potent agency in urging political, educational and industrial democracy towards its final triumph, and in fixing the manacles of capitalism and industrial slavery on the world. Since the Reformation religion has been only a dissolving tradition, without any real force or potency in and over society. For individuals it has, from time to time, possessed all its old energy: over them it has exerted all its old influence, and just as great saints, confessors and even martyrs have shed their glory over the last century as at any time in the past. But since the Reformation religion has gone back to the catacombs whence Constantine had drawn it fifteen centuries ago: it is now the precious possession of the individual, hidden, cloistered,

fearful of coming to the light. As a dominating influence over states, as a controlling power in diplomacy, business, politics, philosophy, education, art, or over communities as such, it is now, and has been for a long time, a negligible factor.

This is true as well of Catholicism as of Protestantism. For generations at a time it has been the effective moral and spiritual guardian of nations, and while this was true civilization flourished as neither before nor since. The Renaissance destroyed the claim of the Church, as it was then, to such moral and spiritual leadership, and the Reformation and Revolution destroyed the fact. For a time, as a result of the Counter-Reformation, something of the old leadership was restored in all its plenitude, where Protestantism had not taken effect, but little by little it surrendered to the new spirit in the world, until now it is not only impotent amongst the nations, it is as well conditioned by the same considerations of materialism and opportunism and a false democracy, as Protestantism, industrialism and the capitalistic-scientific state. The Church still carries *in petto* all that was ever her possession, including infinite possibilities of

beneficent action and influence; at present, however, this is inoperative, and with the rest of the world she stands hesitant and diffident, rejected by the majority of men, ignored by states and denied even the form of leadership.

Democracy in government and democracy in education have each played their part in the destruction of leadership and the establishing of the reign of mediocrity. There is yet a third aspect, or rather result, of the same force, which may perhaps prove in the end the most significant of all, and that is the democratization of society by the breaking down of the just and normal barriers of race, first through the so-called "melting pot" process, second through the substitution of the mongrel for the product of pure blood by reason of the free and reckless mixing of incompatible strains. From the beginning of modern democracy it has been with its adherents a cardinal point of faith that a "free country" should set no limits to immigration of any race, class or degree of cultural development. It is equally a dogma that under a true democracy there is no discrimination possible between individuals on the score of difference

in race, blood or status, and that therefore no restrictions should be recognized or established which would control or limit absolute freedom of union in marital relations and the legal procreation of children.

The nineteenth century superstition, erected by the doctrinaire protagonists of "evolution," that human progress was both automatic and constant, through the acquisition of new qualities by education, the force of environment, and "natural selection," has been the scientific justification for the supposedly "democratic" principle of free immigration and free mating. Were the theory demonstrably true it would indeed negative the chief arguments for the scrupulous recognition and preservation of race values both in marriage and control of immigration. If character is determined by education and environment, and is transmitted in substance generation after generation, the question is manifestly only one of enough education, of the right kind, and distributed with sufficient generality. Mongol and Slovak, Malay and Hottentot stand on the same plane with Latin and Saxon and Celt, for it is merely a question of education, environment and continued breeding;

good is cumulative, automatically transmitted, and time is the answer to all.

On this superstition has been erected the great modern system of universal state education. With a mechanical exactness it has failed to produce appreciable results. State education, secularized, standardized, compulsory, has left native character untouched, furnishing only a body of faculties, used to good ends if such was the character-predisposition of the individual, for base ends if this race or family predisposition so determined. Nor is there any evidence whatever that what the father acquires the son inherits. It is a commonplace of sociology that the American-born son of the foreign-born immigrant of a decadent race or inferior blood who himself had reacted to the stimulus of a new environment and unprecedented educational opportunities, is not in general an advance over his progenitor either in character or capacity, but rather, however great his educational acquirement, a retrogression and a return to type.

Empirical "science" of the nineteenth century yields to the more exact science of the twentieth century, and it is now admitted that acquired characteristics are not

heritable. That which persists is some indelible quality of blood or of race, modified by the conjunction of two germ plasms in generation; while new species are not the result of the building up of one characteristic added to another by inheritance and the process of "natural selection" and the "survival of the fittest," but of some cataclysmic action the nature and source of which no scientist has determined or dared to assume.

With the breakdown of this once popular theory, the factor of blood becomes no longer negligible and the doctrine of the omnipotence of education and environment falls to the ground, yet we still continue debauching race by free movement of peoples through immigration, and by unrestrained mating amongst men and women of alien racial qualities. In large sections of America society is now completely mongrel, and the same is true of portions of Europe where the process is of increasing force. Through uncontrolled alliances the same thing is happening in blood, and apparently the whole world is about to repeat what already has happened in Russia, the Balkans and Central America.

The appeal of the eugenist to biology and

the testimony of botany and zoölogy is dangerous when carried too far — as it generally is — for it leaves out of account the element of the soul, which is a factor that enters into the human consideration and is not operative in the case of plants and beasts. For those who deny its existence except as a biological product of the working of purely physical forces, the democratic principle of the free movement, intercourse and mating of peoples of every known blood, race and status can only appear the blackest and most imbecile crime in the human calendar. Continued for another generation or two the result can only be universal mongrelism and the consequent end of culture and civilization. Cross-fertilization and the producing of special and higher types thereby is a perfectly artificial process, and however brilliant the result in the first instance the tendency of reversion to type is inexorable. Either the result is a hybrid without power of propagation, or a precarious phenomenon tending inevitably towards a retrogression that in a few generations comes back to the normal type.

Nor is the situation much better when regarded from the standpoint of those who

postulate of each individual a spiritual factor that is not the product of biological processes but is something of a different nature added thereto. This element in the human entity works towards the negativing or amelioration of the conditions consequent on the predispositions determined by heredity — race factors, blood tendencies, new inclinations that are the result of the combining of two different sets of parental characteristics — and towards the utilization of the possibilities inherent in education and environment. It is, however, not omnipotent; it is conditioned by the nature of the various forces with which it deals, and it can rise superior to them only when it calls into play the energy of those kindred spiritual forces that exist, are universally available, and are the only sure instrument of victory over the gravitational pull of a predetermined natural handicap. Recognition of, and reliance on, these remedial factors decrease in inverse ratio to their necessity, and this is true both of the individual and the community as a whole. The time comes for both when the power of the degenerative forces becomes so great through poverty of blood, hybridization of race and depravity

of status, that the energy of the spiritual factor is negatived, and the individual or the community or the race declines, completes the final surrender, and fails, disappearing in ignominy and oblivion. There is no tragedy greater than that of the human soul full of the promise and potency and desire of good things, imprisoned in the forbidding circle of mongrel blood, inimical inheritance and pernicious environment against which it desperately rebels, but from which there is no possibility of escape except through the power of supernatural assistance on which it no longer possesses the impulse or the will to call.

Democracy of method then, not democracy of ideal, has not only failed to attain the supreme objects for which, in its protean forms, it has been devised, it has as well brought into existence a system that has practically eliminated sane, potent and constructive leadership and has therefore betrayed society, involving it in a profound mediocrity which now confronts that fate which always follows identical progress in other categories of the organic world,—reversion to type and ultimate sterility.

And so we stand to-day where the Great

War has revealed us, peoples without leaders; helpless, inefficient and, barring the miracle of redemption through bitter chastizement, hurrying on to anarchy or slavery as the fortunes of war may determine. The true democracy of St. Louis, Edward I and Washington is forgotten and a false democracy has taken its place, employing the old shibboleths but ignoring the thing itself, while inventing one new device after another to serve as a red herring drawn across the trail pursued implacably by the ever-increasing numbers of those who see the inefficiency and deceitfulness of it all, and maintain their pursuit so that in the end they may establish what is to them democracy pure and simple, but is in fact its *reductio ad absurdum.*

Whatever the issue of the war there is for the world neither release from intolerable menace nor yet a proximate salvation. The war that is redeeming myriads of souls leaves the organic system of society, both material and spiritual, untouched. Were peace to come to-morrow, after a brief period of readjustment life would go on much as before, with industrialism supreme and capitalism *versus* proletarianism the condi-

tioning clauses of its unstable equilibrium; with the parliamentary system still in vogue, and all this means of incapacity, opportunism and the political survival of the unfit; with religion in a condition of heresy against heresy and all against a thin simulacrum of Catholicity; with philosophy still clinging to the shreds and tatters of evolution or remodelling itself on the plausible lines of an intellectualized materialism; with the mongrelizing of blood and community going steadily forward, and with education prowling through the ruins of scientific determinism, and struggling ever to build out of its shreds and shards some new machine that will make even more certain the direct application of scholastic results to the one problem of wealth production — with education failing as before to produce leaders to fill a demand that no longer exists.

The best that one can say, if peace really comes again and man returns once more to his old ways of life, is that this return will be for the briefest of periods. The war is only the first of a series, for one war alone cannot undo the cumulative errors of five centuries. Either after a year or two for the taking of breath, or merging into it with-

out appreciable break, will come the second world-wide convulsion, the war for the revolutionizing of society, which will run its long and terrible course in the determined effort to substitute for our present industrial system of life (in itself perhaps the worst man has devised) something more consonant with the principles of justice. And the third, which may also follow immediately after the second, or merge into it, or even precede it, will be the war between the false democracy, now everywhere in evidence, and whatever is left of the true democracy of man's ideal. From these three visitations there is no escape. The thing we have so earnestly and arduously built up out of Renaissance, Reformation and Revolution, with industrialism and scientific determinism as the structural material, is not a civilization at all, and it must be destroyed in order that the ground may be cleared for something better. At first it seemed that one war might do the work, when we considered the glorious regeneration of France and the heroism and self-sacrifice of all our allies. We know better now. We can see that the war has not touched the industrial problem at all, nor the religious nor the

social nor the political. Capitalist on the one hand, proletarian on the other, when they stop to think of themselves in either capacity, are just of the same old kidney as before, and the problem of final solution only hangs in abeyance. The same is true of government in France, England, America. Patriotism and devotion, genuine as they are in many cases, serve only as a costume easily laid aside, and underneath is just the same old politician, learning nothing, forgetting nothing. Nothing is added to the issue by rotund phrases about the warfare for universal democracy. When nations are blindly and half unconsciously fighting for the last shreds of honour and liberty left over from an old Christian civilization, their case is not fortified by suggestions that they really are struggling to preserve and extend representative government, universal suffrage or direct legislation; rather something is taken away from a holy cause.

Great leaders could not have averted the war, and when Lloyd George declares that if Germany had been a democracy the war could not have occurred, he is simply indulging in the standard type of political jargon. The issue was too great to be set

aside by a change from imperialistic efficiency to democratic incapacity.

On the other hand, it is true that men competent to see clearly, capable of thinking constructively, and with will to lead capably, might, at this juncture, make this the last war and avert the grim terror of the two others to come. "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" is on the wall in words of fire and blood, and the Belshazzars of modernism can neither understand them, nor, which is worse, find their interpreter, therefore they and we go on to our predestined fate.

Democracy, without the supreme leadership of men who by nature or divine direction can speak and act with and by authority, is a greater menace than autocracy. Men and nations have been what they have been, either for good or evil, not by the will of a numerical majority but by the supreme leadership of the few—seers, prophets, captains of men; and so it always will be. When, as now, the greatest crisis in fifteen centuries overpasses the world, and society sinks under the nemesis of universal mediocrity, then we realize that the system has doomed itself, since, impotent to produce leaders, it has signed its own death warrant.

What we confront through democracy *as it is interpreted to-day* is a degradation of the human potential through a double dissipation of energy. With no defensible standard of comparative values, all the spiritual and mental force in men is turned towards the realization of the unimportant, to which accomplishment it is given with a prodigality hardly equalled in the Middle Ages when it was lavished on the realization of the essential. Simultaneously man has been dissipating the stored-up energy of the world through his mastery of thermodynamics and his precarious dominion over electrical forces, at such a rate that physical potential has been degraded in a hundred years more than in the preceding hundred centuries. Of what becomes of this fabulous force, what the permanent contributions may be to human life, he cares little. It is sufficient for him to realize that he is the arbiter of this gigantic power, and if it is exploited and dissipated, with nothing of lasting value to show, he cares no more than any other type of spendthrift.

As Henry Adams has said, with cold irony, "Neither historians nor sociologists can afford to let themselves be driven into

admitting that every gain of power — from gunpowder to steam, from the dynamo to the Daimler motor — has been made at the cost of man's and of woman's vitality." Yet the fact remains that this is true, and our present deplorable estate is partly the result of this very degradation and dissipation of energy, which has been lavished on activities totally unproductive so far as lasting benefits are concerned, and spread out over a vast area where it disappears without results.

It would seem that there is in the world at any one time only a certain amount of available spiritual energy, which may be preserved and made effectively operative through concentration, or lost through dissipation, while the physical energy, stored up out of endless ages, is limited in its original quantity, and only added to, if at all, in a very small degree. At the beginning of each new era this spiritual force is precipitated in the form of great leaders who translate it, and transmit it in available form (and directed toward productive ends) to the general mass of men. Later, the specific era having reached its meridian, the leaders pass as the prophets before them, and the

force once concentrated in them, and made operative, spreads thin and ineffective, and at last is dissipated through the general mass of men. At the end the prodigal majority, having wasted its inherited substance in riotous living, falls into puerile contests and finally destroys itself, and another era takes its place in history to the accompaniment of war and anarchy. So Greece lost its leaders and squandered its intellectual heritage; so Rome dissipated its Imperial force and succumbed to barbarism; so Mediævalism played fast and loose with its spiritual capital, and so modernism is now wasting all it had inherited from these three antecedent periods, and prepares to take its place with antiquity.

From the earliest Renaissance, great men in whom were concentrated the dynamic force of a crescent era, built up the imposing and consistent thing called modernism. Great men transformed this into the terms of industrial civilization, when they had given their commanding abilities to the discovery and the utilization of the latent physical forces inherent in the world, hitherto untouched by antecedent generations. Then they ceased, almost by a cataclysmic cutting-

off, and little men, little in spirit and crafty rather than creative, took into their hands the carrying out of the last phase of epochal development — the establishing of the hegemony of the world on a basis of physical and intellectual force from which the last elements of morality had been purged away. Little men, blinded, puzzled and appalled, met the crisis as best they could, and for three years the world has been plunged in carnage and destruction, while military, political and psychological blunders have followed each other in a witches' sabbath of incapacity.

And now the victory of the shrewd, cynical and definitely immoral forces, so long held impossible even in thought, is more clearly indicated than at any time since the Battle of the Marne. The exploits of Russia in its efforts to make the "world safe for democracy" may very well prove the determining factor. A miracle is of course possible, but at present not predicable. A Napoleon there, a Charlemagne in France, a Washington here, even a Cromwell in England, might avert the nemesis of mediocrity, but a Kerensky, a Painlevé, a Lloyd George does not fill the bill. With a Ger-

man victory and a German peace, modernism, supreme over all the world, may establish a régime of mechanistic efficiency. Imperial, Godless, temporally superb, but without real leaders, it can only prove an interlude of plausibility, a preface to sudden degeneration, and the chaos of the end of the century, when the world-slavery of Teutonistic modernism goes down to its final ruin, will leave the record of the present war as that of a mere rehearsal.

And if the miracle happens; if the leader comes who can shatter the Brumagem efficiency of Prussia, and so the world is saved from a fate it richly deserves, can we say that we have a better hope? Yes, if with victory comes realization of what the war means, and why it came upon us. For this realization one of two things is necessary: either such a spiritual regeneration of the great mass of people, through suffering and sorrow and privation and the bitter schooling of the trenches, that they will follow up their victory over the enemy in the field by an even greater victory over the enemy at home in religion, philosophy and society, purging a chastened world of the last folly and the last wickedness of modernism; or

the coming once more of the great prophets and captains of men who alone can lead as their predecessors have always led, and so build up a new life on the ruins of an old that has passed in blood and flame and dishonour.

If none of these things happens, if there is a German peace, or an inconclusive "peace through negotiation," or a victory in the field for the Allies that is followed by no attainment of a new vision; if in the end the world returns to the same system, the same basis of judgment, the same standard of comparative values that held before the war—what then?

Russia already has given the answer.

POSTSCRIPT

WRITTEN in the spring of the year 1918, as it was, "The Nemesis of Mediocrity" may very well have become superannuated as to its estimates of world-leaders by the time it was published, for events moved as the avalanche and years were compressed into days. I have been asked if I should write differently now, and criticized for ignoring some unquestionable leaders whose glory has filled the consciousness of men since that mysterious twenty-fifth of August, 1918, when, in an hour, it would seem, overwhelming German victory turned into inevitable and crushing defeat, a defeat eternally recorded in history ten weeks later on that epic Eleventh of November.

Yes, in one respect a different estimate would be set down, but its nature makes only more salient the lack of real leadership in the categories of civil life and thought. Leadership in religion and philosophy is perhaps a degree less evident than it was nine months ago and the achievement of "victory without peace" instead of instigating constructive activity along these lines seems rather to have acted as a further deterrent. Lenine and Trotsky are more to the front with a certain leadership that is at

least striking, if one is disposed to accept what they offer as constituting the sort of thing one has in mind when thinking of the great leaders of the past. So it may be admitted were Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg until their summary taking-off. In politics and statecraft the world on the one hand has lost a real leader in Roosevelt, while on the other a sort of merger has been effected whereby — for the moment at least — all issues have been pooled in one extraordinary Personality who has become a kind of super-leader, universal dictator, Manager of the World — the adequate phrase does not suggest itself. That here is leadership of Brobdignagian degree no one could deny, but in a way this supersession of the many by the one would seem to argue in favour of the original hypothesis that leadership, as a working fact in society as a whole, has ceased. Never before, except perhaps in the case of the Dark Ages, when Charlemagne stood as the one lone personality in the midst of blank incompetence, has a phenomenon such as this presented itself. Of the ultimate result for the world it is still too early to venture a forecast. On the historians of the far future must fall the burden of estimate.

At the present writing this singularity of leadership would appear to be threatened by M. Clemenceau who in the first edition of this book was carelessly referred to as "the superannuated." Again the word was hardly descriptive, but it was used at a time when the

once redoubtable "Tiger" had just made his sensational re-entry on the scene where he was, it appears, destined to play a part (at present unfinished) that at the time was hardly subject to anticipation. The word is hereby withdrawn with sincere apologies: "superannuated" he conspicuously is not. Whether his astute direction of baffling affairs is, or may become, great constructive leadership is another matter not yet determined. By the time this "Postscript" is published not his alone, but other salient claims to man-mastership, may have been decided either in the negative or the affirmative.

There is one field however in which real leadership has appeared, manifesting itself very largely since this book was written: the field of action. If it had not been so there would have been no editions of this book subsequent to the first, nor of any other for that matter. Barring this miraculous emergence of great captains, we should by now have become a series of conquered peoples in vassalage to Imperial Teutonism.

To have omitted the name of King Albert of Belgium was a blunder, but it was of carelessness rather than of false measure. A great captain he is, of an army and of a people, in the sense of all historical greatness; and the name of Marshal Joffre should also have been set down in reverence and gratitude. Since the great Eighteenth of July, men of action have leaped to the front with a swiftness that is matched only by quality. Set first the immortal

name of Marshal Foch, the Great Captain of the Great War, and then Field Marshal Haig, Generals Pershing, Petain, Allenby, Castelnau, Diaz; Admirals Jellicoe, Beatty, Sims and, thank God, many others. In six months the lack of four years was supplied, and had the war gone on another three months to the final annihilation of the enemy in the field, who can doubt that the list would have run to four times its present length? The quality of the men in the trenches was a glory and an amazement; on land and sea and in the air young officers were finding themselves and revealing both mettle and character as never could have been during peace. What was is earnest of what might have been — of what may be, and here lies the great hope in a time of great doubt.

In the field of action leadership at last has shown itself. What democracy and universal education and wealth and science and industrialism had failed to make manifest was hammered out on its hard anvils. Can this tempered steel be turned from its original destiny; can the fine swords of the new men of action be beaten into pruning hooks to gather the ripe harvest of mingled wheat and tares, and into ploughshares for the ploughing of the war-fields in preparation for the greater harvest that is to come? It is the fateful question on whose answer hangs all the future.

The peril of war has given place (at least for the moment) to the far greater peril of an untimely " peace " wherein the masters of our

destiny flounder as in the first years of conflict. Paris at the present moment, or Europe for that matter, can hardly be called a centre and source of serene confidence. "Secret diplomacy" has yielded to a confusion of words which are again being employed with notable success for the concealing of thoughts. Russia and Germany are midnight mysteries with no Sherlock Holmes to probe their sinister depths. No one really knows anything about anything, and he is told less — so far as the real things are concerned. Meanwhile the old influences become operative again; the old two alternatives, conservatism and radicalism, or under the new nomenclature, reactionism and Bolshevism, offer themselves as the only choice, while the third alternative (which always exists and is always right, and is never recognized or victorious) finds neither leaders nor adherents, although the Great Alternatives represent only a mean minority on either hand. Legislation grows more leaderless and imbecile; ridiculous individuals are increasingly chosen for important executive and diplomatic positions; organized religion is either silent on the one hand or on the other offers as its great solution the raising of some hundreds of millions for the purpose of bringing the blessings of Methodism or Puritanism to the benighted peoples of the Catholic countries; philosophy is merged in the sentimental pacifism or the parlour Bolshevism of the weekly press; art and letters wander in the "vast inane" and the

feeble gleams of an old liberty are extinguished in the water-floods of doctrinaire legislation.

One is impelled to pray for the quick return of all the men of all the armies, for in them alone seems the possibility of salvation through leadership, if (and this is fundamental) they bring back with them, operative and undiminished, the vision and the idea of justice and the good sense the war has revealed in them, and to them, when all else has failed. Bring them back and offer them in strong support. Without this, the future is not entirely clear.

R. A. C.

BOSTON, 12th February, 1919.

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